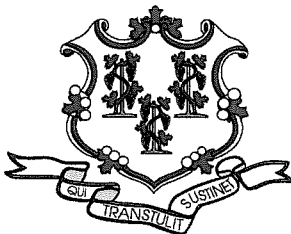


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Connecticut Commission On Health Equity

Executive Committee

Chairperson
Glenn Cassis
Vice-Chairperson
Jose Ortiz
Secretary
Sylvia Gafford-Alexander
Treasurer
Mui Mui Hin- McCormick
Dr. Marie Spivey- **Ex Officio**



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February 25, 2015

Good Evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Glenn Cassis, Executive Director of the State of Connecticut African-American Affairs Commission and recently I was elected Chair of the Connecticut Commission on Health Equity. I come before you to plead for your support and action to restore the Commission on Health Equity in the Governor's proposed budget.

The Commission was signed into legislation in 2008 under Public Act No. 08-171, "an Act Establishing a Commission on Health Equity." The purpose of Commission is to affect legislation to improve the health outcomes of residents based on race, ethnicity, gender and linguistic ability. The work of this Commission is critical; its mandate and purview cuts across all other State Commissions and agencies. Populations that are the focus or within the purview of all other Commissions/task forces, and state agencies fall naturally within the purview of the Commission on Health Equity. The populations that can and will benefit from the work of this Commission include children, adults and children with mental, physical, and/or cognitive disabilities, people who live in rural areas, people of African descent, women, men, LGBT populations, Native Americans,


Latinos/Hispanics, Asians, poor people, middle income people, victims of abuse and neglect, the elderly, and all other residents of Connecticut.

For the past four plus years this Commission has experienced a rocky road. There has been very little administrative or staff support. Reporting lines have bounced between the Office of the Healthcare Advocate and the Department of Insurance. In addition the Executive Committee has had to reach out to the Dept. of Administrative Services and OPM for personnel and budget needs. As a result H.B. 5435 An Act Concerning the Commission on Health Equity was proposed in an effort to streamline the Commission's reporting and operating functions.

Each of you have received the Commission's 2014 Annual Report. Despite the lack of staff for most of the year, the Commission has been able to do exceptional work. Restoring the Commission as it was intended in Public Act No. 08-17, with the ability to staff it with a Director, Legislative Aid and clerical support will enable the Commission to successfully accomplish its mandate. Merging the Commission into the Department of Public Health would not be a savings in the Governor's budget since CHE is funded through fees from the Department of Insurance. I urge you to reverse the Governor's proposal and restore the Commission on Health Equity to the Department of Insurance.

Thank you.

Respectively,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Glenn A. Cassis".

Glenn A. Cassis
Executive Director AAAC and
Chairman, Connecticut Commission on Health Equity